

Soldier Hollow Gets Ready for the World

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In 2002 more than 320,000 fans are expected to flock to Charleston's Soldier Hollow to salute medalists in the Olympic Biathlon and Nordic skiing competitions. The venue is touted as an environmental A+. It is currently in use by local athletes and tourists. The transformation of Wasatch Mountain State Park's 4,000 acre venue has included many great events during 2000.

Day Lodge Finished

Ground broke July 5 on a 10,800-square-foot day lodge near the competition management building. It was funded by \$700,000 from the State Legislature and \$92,000 from the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC). The airy structure, finished was built with trestle wood submerged under the Great Salt Lake since 1902 and includes a 32-foot rock fireplace for skiers to enjoy. Painted with rust, sage and pale yellow hues, the lodge dedication takes place Jan. 5 followed by a community day on Jan. 6.

Transportation

After a year of searching, SLOC chose the sewer farm south fields at 2400 South for a park and ride lot after receiving complaints concerning SLOC's original plan to construct enormous parking lots at Soldier Hollow. Local officials sent a letter to SLOC urging road improvement near the venue. The U.S. Deputy

Transportation Secretary's announcement Oct. 27 regarding \$15 million for final Olympic transportation projects led some to believe funding was available. But the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) informed Wasatch Olympic organizer Bob Mathis the highway project is over budget by \$200,000. Soldier Hollow is over budget by \$400,000, and there is a \$6 million shortage to fund all



Gov. Leavitt at opening ceremony.



Biathlete trains.



Soldier Hollow's impressive day lodge opened in December.

Olympic transportation requests.

A ceremony was held Nov. 20 on the venue's Shuttle Loop Road to celebrate the completion of a construction phase for access roads. Formerly gravel, the roads were widened and brought up to highway standards and parking lots were built according to UDOT.

Tate Barn

The Friends of the Wasatch Mountain State Park and park officials have begun restoration of the century old Tate Barn near the venue. It was in serious disrepair, but has been meticulously dismantled. Reconstruction will begin once fundraising is complete, with original boards being used, and organizers hope to have it finished before 2002.

World Cup

Athletes from around the world convened in Charleston Dec. 8-10. Soldier Hollow held its first-ever Nordic combined World Cup and Olympic test event. Athletes and organizers alike raved about the early snow conditions and organization of the future Olympic venue.



EDITORIAL

Rumors of the Initiative's Death are Greatly Exaggerated

With the Supreme Court's ruling last week many, including some at this paper, thought all hope of early elections for the County Council was lost. Not so. Careful reading of the Supreme Court's decision makes it clear that the justices did not rule against early elections. The justices said that they, would not grant the "Extraordinary Petition."

So next week, the initiative sponsors will file an action in the 4th District Court asking for early elections and the reinstatement of all the provisions such as recall that the County Commissioners, via their surrogate County Attorney Derek Pullan,

improperly had removed. The case must now work its way through the legal system, but it is not dead, not by a long shot. All that the Commissioners won was an extension of the inevitable.

There are some that argue that a longer transition period makes for a smoother, more orderly transfer of power. We need only look at Salt Lake County to see that this is bunk. Salt Lake County took the go slow approach and look at the results. County Commissioner Mary Callaghan leaves office midterm with a \$279,500 severance package. Commissioner Brent Overton will stay on as a \$85,000-a-year adviser, to make "good government possible." In the last minute deal department, Salt Lake County gave back \$6 million dollars to Allient Industries (formerly Hercules) in property taxes. Allient argued that since it had laid off a large number of its staff its' property was worth less, as if the value of prop-

erty was somehow tied to the number of people working there.

The Salt Lake County Commissioners, who all had ties to the company, went along with the charade and gave the money back to the company over the advise of County Attorney David Yocom.

At the final Salt Lake County Commission meeting, the Commissioners paid one final political debt, spending \$250,000 from the Tourist, Recreation, Cultural and Convention Facilities taxes for about 16 acres in Emigration Canyon. The land would allow The Boyer Co. build a second access road, vital for emergency vehicles, to the company's Emigration Oaks subdivision. Once again this expenditure was contrary to the advise of County Attorney Yocom. There appears to be no shame with lame duck commissioners. On the bright side at least in Salt Lake County the County Attorney knows his job is to protect the best

interests of the citizens, not be a lackey for the Commissions.

The commission form of government is a dinosaur. Slowly but surely citizens across the state and nation are dumping commissions with all their attendant abuses. The people demand more and all the maneuverings by present commissioners, the Utah Association of Counties and their mouthpiece in the legislature Mont Evans, cannot stop reform. As Brent Overton said, "We [commissioners] are becoming a dying breed in this state and across the country...Change is OK. It provides an opportunity for people to have input into the process."

The people of Wasatch County can take pride in being among the first in the state to demand more responsible government. Hopefully the courts will allow us to move forward quickly before our current commissioners can take a page from Salt Lake County.

GUEST COMMENTARY